

**Faculty Senate, Tuesday, August 31, 2021 5:00 PM**  
**Hybrid: Wells Fargo Ballroom (Beatty Center 115) and via Zoom**

Voting/unanimous consent results appear in red.

1. Speaker Simon Lewis called the meeting to order at 5:01pm
2. Speaker Lewis asked for a moment of silence in honor of Lucille Whipper and Richard Nunan.
  - Lucille, an alumna of the College of Charleston, was active in the civil rights movement as well as working with the College where, among many contributions, she was instrumental in establishing the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture.
  - Richard, a recently retired faculty member from Philosophy, and an active presence in Faculty Senate, died soon after retirement from a brain tumor.
  - Simon Lewis gave an opportunity for attendees to speak names of those they know who have died from Covid.
3. An in-person count was taken, and a quorum was deemed present. **The April 6, 2021 minutes were approved.**
4. Speaker Lewis asked if there was any objection to his modifying the meeting order in the agenda by moving the two voting matters from New Business forward to ensure a quorum was present. Hearing no objections, **the agenda order was changed by unanimous consent.**
  - **The Senate voted to approve all motions passed during the virtual 2020-21 Senate meetings.**
  - **Irina Gigova was elected as Speaker Pro Tempore**
5. Announcements and Information
  - Speaker Lewis welcomed senators new and old and Raquel Gleicher as the new Faculty Secretariat and RoxAnn Stalvey as the new Faculty Secretary. Meetings are being recorded for Secretary's use only. Change of meeting date from first Monday in September was due to Rosh Hashanah. Reminder that the by-laws limit a speaker to speaking no more than twice on a given issue and for two or fewer minutes per time. Reminder (although not normally a need in this environment), please treat each other with civility. Attendance Verification is due September 14. The CofC library is doing great things to keep our students safe, including requiring face coverings at all times when in the building and requiring Cougar Card to gain access. Please look over their new requirements. In order to take advantage of access to student records on the upgraded DegreeWorks, faculty need to remember to take the FERPA test and familiarize themselves with College privacy policies.
6. Reports
  - Speaker of the Faculty Simon Lewis
    - ◇ Remember to be kind to ourselves and each other.
    - ◇ Much to discuss: Strategic Plan, REI, but also external factors: ban on requiring vaccinations, consequences to changes in SC gun laws – campus can still ban guns on

campus, REACH Act (on tonight's agenda) which stifles faculty ability to control curriculum.

- ◇ Complimented President Hsu, the administration, IT folks and campus for their commitment to keeping us informed
- President Andrew Hsu
  - ◇ Happy to see us in person since it's been since March 2020. Thank you for all the faculty has done to keep this "great institution going." College has had a very successful year despite the unusual year.
  - ◇ COVID-19 Mitigation Policies
    - ◆ We are still in crisis mode and struggling. Will need us all working together to lead to another successful year.
    - ◆ This semester a bit more difficult as the state prevented us from requiring masks. Supreme Court reversed this and within 2 hours of that ruling the Board of Trustees passed ruling the College could require masks. Since 8/17/2021 the College has required masks while indoors. This will be reviewed monthly.
    - ◆ Cannot require vaccinations for students/employees but as of today we are at almost 74% of our students who are vaccinated. This is better than many other state universities who are around 50%. MUSC is the exception at 95%. CofC is higher than all other institutions in the state.
    - ◆ CofC has provided many incentives to encourage vaccination. 15 employees and 9 students were drawn to receive professional development and scholarship dollars respectively. Names of the winners are not allowed to be announced as that violates privacy rights because it reveals vaccination status, but the winners are encouraged to announce via social media.
    - ◆ Holding vaccination clinics with Johnson&Johnson and Moderna vaccines on campus. Also, providing rapid testing kits to employees as available. 385 kits will be on campus tomorrow (Wednesday 9/1). People on campus are going to local pharmacies to buy kits to give to employees.
    - ◆ Providing free face coverings and N-95 masks. Have 25,000 maroon cloth masks that can be given to students. Get them from Central Stores. Faculty can get those masks to give to students who are without.
    - ◆ Asked students to upload proof of vaccination or negative test. 97% of students have complied. They are chasing the rest. Those students' Cougar Cards are no longer active and there is a hold on their account preventing registration. Dr. Hsu is also considering fines. He is not a fan of these punitive measures but must do things to keep the campus safe.
    - ◆ Questions: (Response, as applicable, italicized)
      - a. Thomas Ivey – Senator from Mathematics – Students need to be reminded to wear masks over their noses. He asks that official announcements should encourage this. *President will get that added to Vax on Bricks and in future communications*
      - b. Lisa Covert – guest from History, president of AAUP – question about high temperatures in the classroom that make it difficult to teach – thinks the drop in masks being properly worn may be partly due to the heat of the room. What are the College's short-term plans? *President Hsu walked around to classrooms*

*on Monday and went to Maybank first floor where temperatures were high. Spoke with VP for facilities who is searching for temporary solutions. This has been a problem in the fall each of the three semesters he has been here. He too is frustrated and ties it to the lack of budget earmarked for facilities work. Starting last year \$3M has been allocated for maintenance – note that paint and the look of buildings has improved, but it will take probably 5-10 years to fix all of the problems. Planning to put \$1M this year into HVAC preventative maintenance so that parts can be pre-ordered. John Morris added that Maybank has temporary replacement bearings, replacing chillers in Bell and Johnson Silcox. \$1M will renew some old infrastructures.*

- c. Elisa Jones – guest, History - Has the College spoken with public health experts to give Chairs and faculty/instructors guidance for when class/community/campus spread indicates that it might be time to move a class online? Or alternatively, does the College have a situation in mind that is the tipping point for going online? It is great to give faculty flexibility to make that decision since it might depend on classrooms and the type of class, but guidance seems like it would prevent a major outbreak. – *President Hsu: giving faculty authority to move classes online as desired, consulting with health care experts – none able to give a number that says when to adjust to online, continue to consult and listen to CDC and DHEC; last year's high-water mark was 250 active Covid cases and CofC was able to handle the situation. Saw a spike at start of semester, as expected, which topped at 62 cases much less than last year's "high water mark"; hoping to never get as high as last year again. Hoping for best but prepared for the worst.*
- d. Jacob Steere-Williams – Guest, History -- Can faculty move class online? *Provost Austin: Yes if one or more students tests positive in the class. Also, if a faculty member has a family member that you are caring for at home, you can also move class online.*
- e. Irina Gigova, Senator, History – Is that the decision of individual faculty? Do I have to talk to my chair or just move it? *Provost Austin: She would hope a faculty member would let the chair know and would hope that the chair would notify the Dean, but only for their information. The decision is up to the faculty. President Hsu: Make certain to let your students know that it is only temporary during quarantine*
- f. Bob Mignone – SSM Senator, Math department – How will we know if a student has Covid? *Bridget McLernon-Sykes: Good system that has been in place for letting faculty know via the contact tracing team. They get data from registrar where they are looking for trends in classroom*
- g. David Hansen – Marketing and Management, guest – What if a faculty member doesn't feel safe? *Provost Austin: If faculty*

*member has concerns about their own health, they should contact HR on the possibility of qualifying for an accommodation to allow them to teach online. 8 faculty have requested, 6 have been approved and 2 are waiting for physician paperwork.*

- h. Lisa Covert – Wondering if more frequent testing on campus?  
*Bridget McLernon-Sykes: Encourage students with symptoms to reach out to Health Services as they can test all day long every day at Health Services. CofC has a Covid management team that can perhaps consider more tests, but the College hires a third party to do those tests.*

- Positive notes to end on –

- ◇ Last year, CofC did really well thanks to hard work of the faculty. Clemson had 15 furlough days, USC one-time pay cut, Winthrop and Coastal had 20 furlough days, and MUSC laid off 900 employees while the College of Charleston had a small surplus last year with no furloughs nor any reduction in take-home pay – only furloughs were volunteers including President Hsu and some of his leadership team to show that they were in support of the struggles. Not expecting any fiscal burden this year. This shows the importance of planning and vision and the strategic plan.

- ◇ Strategic Plan

- ◆ Pillar I – Student Success: Retention was the focus for last year: fall to spring retention improved and hoping fall to fall retention data is strong. Every 1% retention rate is worth \$.5M to bottom line. Software solutions being implemented to assist students in academic success. Focus on improving student well-being and have hired new Counseling Center Director who starts in October. Adding a second-year experience this fall.
- ◆ Pillar II – Academic Distinction: Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has been established with Margaret Hagood as director.
- ◆ Pillar III – Employee Success: Employee tuition program, cost-of-living increases (3 % - 2.5% of which came from the state and .5% from the College), Strategic Merit Raise Exercise – in last year’s survey 60% of faculty said they were underpaid – so also allocated some funds for merit raises. Capped raises at no more than 15%.

- ◇ New and Noteworthy:

- ◆ Passage of DP/U language in proviso to allow universities like CofC to offer up to 5 terminal degrees;
- ◆ Increased state funding to 2008 funding level which was the high-water mark.
- ◆ Athletics and Academics are winning awards
- ◆ This past year was record-setting: applications were up from 12,477 in 2019 to over 20,000 applications in 2021. Decided to take more students this year and accepted a few more freshmen (2476), which is the highest number in College history. Future goal is still 2300 per year.
- ◆ Philanthropy: \$20.2M in new commitments, the highest ever figure and up from \$17.7M last year which was itself an increase from \$15.8M in 2019; 6 seven-figure gifts received.

- ◇ Questions: (Response italicized)

- ◆ Jacob Steere-Williams – guest, History: Where I’m seeing a worrying disconnect, is that the R&D budget in my department has been slashed to a historic low in the last decade (\$1000 or less per faculty). How are we supposed to realize this success in light of decreased faculty R&D funds?  
*President Hsu: Didn’t realize this had been reduced, but this is controlled on departmental level not by the president. However, if College increases fundraising then there will be more funds for R&D. Administration is considering a new model where each School will become a revenue center (Responsibility Center [RCM] Model) and as long as your School raises and invests in R&D your R&D funds will increase.*
- ◆ David Boucher - Biochemistry, Senator: Did pay increase extend to adjunct?  
*Hsu: No. Austin: Trying to see if we have financial ability to increase for this year.*
- ◆ Irina Gigova – History, Senator: Will faculty be able to review the RCM model? Also, thanks to leadership for all they have done this year.  
*Hsu: Yes. We are leaning on external specialists to help with this. Plan on multiple town-hall meetings..*
- ◆ Nathaniel Walker, Senator for Art & Architectural History: Will schools have any control over the revenue gain system—in other words, for tuition rates?  
*Hsu: No local control on tuition rates; that is up to the Board of Trustees.*

## 7. New Business

- <See above for new business related to votes moved to the start of the meeting>
- REACH Act – Claire Wofford – Associate Professor in Political Science, Guest – Reinforcing College Education on America’s Constitutional Heritage Act (REACH Act) – SC legislature requires 3-credit class in American History, American Government, or some other course where students must read at a minimum: Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Emancipation Proclamation, five essays from Federalist Papers, one document foundational to African American Freedom Struggle – Provost and Speaker identified 12 courses at CofC that would satisfy the Act for this year and were forced to identify these courses quickly because of the time line in place from SC legislature. Prof Wofford believes universities are traditionally protected from government legislature of curriculum, but with the REACH Act SC legislators have prescribed which parts of American history must be taught, violating faculty rights to academic freedom. The Act also violates the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment in Prof. Wofford’s opinion – government isn’t allowed to regulate what you say or compel you to speak but she feels that the REACH Act does exactly that by compelling faculty to speak on certain prescribed texts and usurping our ability to determine if some other documents or projects might be more engaging or better suited than simply reading the documents prescribed; Most troubling is the “slippery slope” possibility that failing to challenge this Act could encourage the state legislature to dictate more content in future for other courses.
  - ◇ Comments
    - ◆ Lisa Covert, History, guest – Thanks for bringing the topic up. Dr. Covert encouraged Senators to consider a resolution related to the Act. It is on the agenda for the AAUP state-wide conference on September 11.
    - ◆ Suanne Ansari, guest, Chair of General Education Committee, explained that her committee, in order to comply with the REACH Act, will have to review

course proposals to satisfy the Act. She hoped Faculty Senate will consent to review standards for approval in Curriculog.

- ◆ Speaker Lewis thanked committee chairs.
- Sustainable Literacy Institute – Laura Turner, Theater, guest – Based on what she hears, she believes Darcy Everett will retain her position but Todd LeVasseur will lose his job at the end of this year. (He did not ask her to speak.) QEP program is ending but she does not believe SLI should end. For example, QEP initiative led to FYE program and peer advisors. She noted our core commitments which include “sustainable solutions” and “diversity & equity”. Sustainability education creates gains in our students and allows for education of our faculty. She shared data showing that CofC students are at or above the national average in understanding sustainability concepts. Also concerned that sustainability content is being shifted to Facilities Management away from academics. Encourages retention of the SLI program and the retention of Todd LeVasseur who has “shouldered \$.5M QEP successfully while being a temporary employee”. Dissolving SLI seems counter to our College’s strategic plans. Hopes Senate will support this.
  - ◇ Questions/Comments: <Responses italicized>
    - ◆ Irina Gigova – history, senator: Didn’t know there were plans to close SLI, can we hear more? *Provost Austin: Thanks, Laura, for bringing forward. There are no plans to move away from the institution’s commitment to sustainability. Dean Knotts and others talking about creating a major in environmental studies and sustainability. The College is a SACS COC accredited institution, and SACS expects we will institutionalize results of QEP. We have 1.5 years to turn in that report and are then required to have the next QEP in place. Creating a major in this area is the way CofC is planning to institutionalize the current QEP. Further, moving the experiential piece to Facilities Management provides a way that students can have hands-on learning; this is in keeping with most other institutions. Margaret Hagood will be working with current QEP director to solidify. Since Provost Austin and Laura met last year, she was surprised to discover that a previous Provost had authorized a tenure-track position in this area – she’s researching this more. Dr. Austin stressed the takeaway: “There is a firm institutional commitment to doing more and doing better and making this a signature program at the College of Charleston.”*
    - ◆ Allison Welch – Biology, guest: 90 faculty across 34 departments have been trained in Sustainability. Data from before the creation of the QEP showed that our students were mostly below national average. What is our plan to institutionalize the QEP? Dr Welch explained that her hope is to have 1) an SLI that helps educate faculty and 2) dedicated programs in sustainability.
    - ◆ David Hansen, Management & Marketing, guest: SLI should not be moved to Facilities but should be in Academics. *Provost Austin: Agrees, academic concepts need to be taught in the classroom. The experiential piece, which may be managed through facilities or through the community, gives students an opportunity to experience what they learn in classroom.*
    - ◆ Kris de Welde – Women & Gender Studies: (Copied from typed comment in Zoom) “It is confusing to me if there is a plan to institutionalize academic aspects of the QEP why the Director and sustainability affiliated faculty have

not been involved in these conversations such as about the shifting of the sustainable development center to facilities, when that particular siloing of “sustainability” is precisely what our QEP strove to change.” *Provost Austin: Brian Fisher was involved in many of these conversations as well as many faculty who are involved right now. Deanna Caveny, Associate Provost: The QEP was not designed as the center for sustainable development. There was also the Office of Sustainability in Business Affairs. The QEP and this office were merged into a center then renamed as the Sustainability Institute (SLI). The original institute was not broken apart but instead the melding occurred of QEP and Office of Sustainability, now there is a separation that occurred over a couple of years.*

- ◆ Laura Turner: How will the College maintain the levels of learning and understanding regarding sustainability that we have gained across campus thanks to SLI? We need someone at the helm. William & Mary, one of our peer institutions, has experiential piece in Institutional Effectiveness. Encourage the College to continue our momentum and be innovative. *Provost: Will continue to offer faculty development.*
- ◆ David Hansen offered to speak with Provost Austin to provide her with fuller history as he drafted the original QEP.

8. Constituents’ General Concerns

- Chris Day, Political Science, Director of African Studies, Senator – drew the Senate’s attention to the LCWA signature series called “Black Lives” with many events planned for fall and more coming in spring. Encouraged all to check out <https://blogs.cofc.edu/lcwa-signature-series-black-lives/> and invited all to attend the Ranky Tanky concert being held September 9 at 7 pm in the Cistern Yard.

9. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.